

QA-572

Kentmorr Airpark

Stevensville vicinity, Queen Anne's County

Constructed 1945 to present

Privately owned

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Kentmorr Airpark is a mid-20th century residential airpark that is located on southern Kent Island, Queen Anne's County. It is accessible by automobile, airplane, and boat. Kentmorr Airpark includes a 1945 turf airstrip, a 1954 artificial harbor with a boat yard and two support buildings, a 1954 artificial beach, a recent restaurant, and 105 residences (26 contributing and 79 non-contributing). Kentmorr Airpark has a grid street pattern, however only the streets and lots along the airstrip and around the Marina have developed. The residences are typical suburban types, including ramblers, Cape Cods, and split-levels. Many of the residences along the airstrip have hangars.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Kentmorr Airpark is possibly the first residential airpark in the United States. Founded in 1945 by recreational pilot Nathan "Bill" Morris, Kentmorr Airpark is a residential subdivision that also includes a grass airstrip, a marina, a restaurant, and beaches. Located on southern Kent Island within commuting distance of Baltimore and Washington, Kentmorr was planned as a vacation or permanent home for recreational pilots. Lots along the airstrip allowed pilots to have private hangars attached to their residences. Kentmorr is unique in that it integrates three modes of transportation: air, road, and water, into a single recreational community.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. QA-572

1. Name of Property

(indicate preferred name)

historic Kentmorr Airpark
other N/A

2. Location

street and number See Continuation Sheet not for publication
city, town Stevensville ☒ vicinity
county Queen Anne's

3. Owner of Property

(give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Multiple
street and number N/A telephone N/A
city, town N/A state N/A zip code N/A

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Queen Anne's County Circuit Court liber Multiple folio Multiple
city, town Centreville tax map 70 tax parcel Multiple tax ID number Multiple

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
☐ Other: _____

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	27	81 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	3	0 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	1	0 structures
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	0	0 objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	31	81 Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> government		
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care		
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture		
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
		<input type="checkbox"/> social		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress		
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown		
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use		
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:		
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory	
			0	

7. Description

Inventory No. QA-572

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Kentmorr Airpark is a mid-20th century residential airpark that is located on southern Kent Island, Queen Anne's County. It is accessible by automobile, airplane, and boat. Kentmorr Airpark includes a 1945 turf airstrip, a 1954 artificial harbor with a boat yard and two support buildings, a 1954 artificial beach, a recent restaurant, and 105 residences (26 contributing and 79 non-contributing). Kentmorr Airpark was laid out with a grid street pattern, however only the streets and lots along the airstrip and around the Marina have been developed. The residences are typical suburban types, including ramblers, Cape Cods, and split levels. Many residences along the airstrip have hangars.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Kentmorr Airpark is a mid-20th century residential airpark that is located on southern Kent Island, Queen Anne's County. It is accessible by automobile, airplane, and boat. Kentmorr Airpark consists of one airstrip, one artificial harbor with a boat yard and two support buildings, one beach, one restaurant, and 105 residences (26 contributing and 79 non-contributing). It is bounded on the north by farmland, on the east by Romancoke Road, on the south by the Queen Anne Colony subdivision, and on the west by the Chesapeake Bay. The land is flat, low, and wooded.

The airstrip forms the northern boundary of Kentmorr. The 2400- by 250-foot turf runway extends east from the Chesapeake Bay. It is unchanged since its creation in 1945 and has no lighting or aids to navigation. Midway down the west edge of Kentmorr is an artificial harbor, known as the Kentmorr Marina, which was created in 1954. Artificial beaches flank the entrance to the harbor. Docks and a covered boat port are attached to the retaining wall that defines the edge of the harbor. West of the harbor is a boat yard. Kentmorr Marina also includes two support buildings: a ca. 1954 1-story brick office and a recent prefabricated shop. At the northwest corner of Kentmorr Marina is the Kentmorr Restaurant. The Kentmorr Restaurant opened in 1954, but the building has been recently replaced.

The original subdivision plat for Kentmorr shows a tight grid of streets with small lots of about 50 by 100 feet. In reality, only the streets and lots along the airstrip and around the Marina have been developed. Department of Assessment and Taxation data indicate that there are 26 contributing residential properties, defined as those constructed by 1960. Contributing residential properties are concentrated along Kentmorr Road and Chesapeake Avenue. They are typical suburban types, largely brick and wood-frame ramblers and Cape Cods. Residential construction continued in these areas from the 1960s through the 1980s with other typical suburban types, particularly split-levels. New construction is taking place along Annette Avenue and the eastern end of Chesapeake Avenue. There are relatively few teardowns. There are 15 residential properties on Kentmorr Road bordering the airstrip. The earliest "hangar bungalows" constructed in the 1940s are no longer standing. The current residences along the airstrip predominantly date from the 1960s to the 1980s.¹ Those with hangars predominately date from the late 20th century. Some hangars are detached, while others are integrated into the design of the residence like a garage.

List of Contributing Resources

Buildings

301 Kentmorr Road
418 Kentmorr Road
517 Kentmorr Road
700 Kentmorr Road
704 Kentmorr Road
800 Kentmorr Road

¹ The two outliers are 418 Kentmorr Road, which dates to 1951 and 318 Kentmorr Road, which dates to 1998.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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Kentmorr Airpark
Continuation Sheet

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802 Kentmorr Road
804 Kentmorr Road
806 Kentmorr Road
900 Kentmorr Road
1000 Kentmorr Road
1100 Kentmorr Road
1101 Kentmorr Road
1106 Kentmorr Road
1108 Kentmorr Road
1112 Kentmorr Road
1202 Kentmorr Road
1204 Kentmorr Road
507 Reynolds Avenue
512 Lane Avenue
514 Allen Avenue
517 Chesapeake Avenue
523 Chesapeake Avenue
525 Chesapeake Avenue
529 Chesapeake Avenue
201 Orchid Street
Brick Office at Kentmorr Marina

Structure

Artificial harbor at Kentmorr Marina

Sites

Airstrip
Beach at Kentmorr Marina
Boat yard at Kentmorr Marina

8. Significance

Inventory No. QA-572

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment/	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates 1945 (founding), 1954 (opening of marina and restaurant) **Architect/Builder** unknown

Construction dates 1945 to present

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register ☐ Maryland Register ☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Kentmorr Airpark is possibly the first residential airpark in the United States. Founded in 1945 by recreational pilot Nathan "Bill" Morris, Kentmorr Airpark is a residential subdivision that also includes a grass airstrip, a marina, a restaurant, and beaches. Located on southern Kent Island within commuting distance of Baltimore and Washington, Kentmorr was planned as a vacation or permanent home for recreational pilots. Lots along the airstrip allowed pilots to have private hangars attached to their residences. Kentmorr is unique in that it integrates three modes of transportation: air, road, and water, into a single recreational community.

RESOURCE HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

Kentmorr Airpark was founded in 1945 by Nathan "Bill" Morris. Morris believed it to be the first residential airpark in the United States. Nathan "Bill" Morris (1907-2005) was a self-taught electrical engineer and a recreational pilot. Originally from Baltimore, he apprenticed as a teenager with Julian P. Friez, an inventor and manufacturer of precision instruments. Morris then joined the American Instrument Company in Silver Spring in the mid 1920s. He designed laboratory equipment and held many patents for refrigeration and heating equipment. During World War II, he developed test chambers that simulated high-altitude conditions for airplane components. Morris also designed an incubator used by Jonas Salk for the polio vaccine. Morris received his pilot's license in 1938 and served in the Civil Air Patrol during World War II.²

In 1945, Morris decided he wanted a waterfront vacation home. He flew up the coast to Nantucket looking for property to buy. On the way back, he veered east of his course and spotted Kent Island. Morris quickly purchased 140 acres on southern Kent Island. He had a potato field cleared and leveled for an airstrip and constructed two "hangar bungalows" (now gone). Kentmorr Airpark, thought to be the nation's first residential airpark, grew as Morris threw weekend parties for fellow aviation enthusiasts. He filed a subdivision plat in 1947 and sold the lots along the airstrip. In 1954, Morris added the Kentmorr Marina and Restaurant.³

A 1948 advertising pamphlet describes Kentmorr as "A private pilot's paradise" for recreational pilots who might otherwise "spend the greater part of their Sundays circling local air fields with no further recreation at hand."⁴ The pamphlet states:

Kentmorr offers the best in outdoor activity ... it is truly a resort with the greatest natural attractions. Here one is attracted by the wide expanse of sandy white bathing beach and the invigorating breezes coming in over the Chesapeake Bay. At and around

² Bernstein, Adam. Bill Morris, 98; Pilot And Shore Developer. Obituary in *Washington Post*. January 6, 2006.

Davis, Clayton. Nathan "Bill" Morris. 1997. www.geocities.com/cd19/morris.

Preston, Edmund, et al. *Maryland Aloft: A Celebration of Aviators, Airfields, and Aerospace*, 94-97.

³ Ibid., Kentmorr Restaurant – About Us. 2004. www.kentmorr.com.

⁴ A Thrilling New Vacation Ground, Kentmorr Airpark. 1948. Pamphlet.

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Kentmorr are fishing and crabbing during the summer months, and excellent duck hunting in season. Forty acres of virgin timberland offer a natural picnic area for owners of Kentmorr homesites. A recreation center has been built for get-togethers of visiting pilots. Facilities for seaplanes and a boat harbor are being planned. Special events are arranged for flying clubs and other groups desiring a perfect day of outdoor enjoyment.⁵

The pamphlet also advertised "hangar bungalows" for rent for \$60 per week. Hangar bungalows were one-story concrete-block buildings with living areas facing the street and integral hangars facing the airstrip. Morris built two hangar bungalows, neither of which is still standing. Morris also built a Cape Cod style "clubhouse" by the airstrip. The clubhouse, at 418 Kentmorr Road, has been converted to a residence.⁶

A mid-1950s pamphlet, entitled "Highway to Pleasure," advertises Kentmorr and the nearby subdivision of Tower Gardens. The pamphlet shows the newly completed Kentmorr Marina and Restaurant and states:

Within an hour's drive from Washington or Baltimore are the well-planned distinctive communities of Kentmorr and Tower Gardens which offer relaxation and recreation at their healthful best. Wide expanses of golden sand beach gently and safely sloping in to the Chesapeake Bay are an important feature of Kentmorr and afford private bathing for residents. An attractive restaurant where delicious sea food dinners and tasty snacks are served, a comfortable club house lounge, and a private air field for private planes up to the DC-3 class are just a few of the many other attractions that bring many visitors and new residents to Kentmorr and Tower Gardens.⁷

Although the full 140 acres of Kentmorr were made available in 1947, only the lots along the airstrip and waterfront developed during the 1940s and 1950s. Development of lots away from the water continues to the present.

As a recreational pilot, Morris flew to Europe, South America, and the Arctic Circle. He said, "All of these are adventure flights. Sometimes I read about a place in National Geographic, and I say, 'I gotta go see that.'" At age 77, he flew across the Atlantic to commemorate Lindbergh's 1927 flight. At age 94, he circled the United States in a solo flight. Morris last renewed his pilot's license in 2005 at the age of 98. He made his final solo flight in August 2005.⁸

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Highway to Pleasure. Undated pamphlet.

⁸ Bernstein, Adam. Bill Morris, 98; Pilot And Shore Developer. Obituary in *Washington Post*. January 6, 2006.
Davis, Clayton. Nathan "Bill" Morris. 1997. www.geocities.com/cd19/morris.
Preston, Edmund, et al. *Maryland Aloft: A Celebration of Aviators, Airfields, and Aerospace*, 94-97.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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- Bernstein, Adam. Bill Morris, 98; Pilot and Shore Developer. Obituary in *Washington Post*. January 6, 2006.
- Davis, Clayton. Nathan "Bill" Morris. 1997. www.geocities.com/cd19/morris.
- Highway to Pleasure. Undated pamphlet. Enoch Pratt Free Library – Maryland Department – Vertical Files – Kentmorr.
- Kentmorr Restaurant – About Us. 2004. www.kentmorr.com.
- Preston, Edmund, et al. *Maryland Aloft: A Celebration of Aviators, Airfields, and Aerospace*. Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust Press, 2003.
- A Thrilling New Vacation Ground, Kentmorr Airpark. 1948. Pamphlet. Enoch Pratt Free Library – Maryland Department – Vertical Files – Kentmorr.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property approximately 140 acres
Acreage of historical setting approximately 140 acres
Quadrangle name Kent Island

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

Kentmorr Airpark consists of the 140 acres acquired by Nathan "Bill" Morris in 1945 and 1946. Kentmorr Airpark is bounded on the north by an adjacent property, on the east by Romancoke Road, on the south by the Queen Anne Colony subdivision, and on the west by the Chesapeake Bay.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Julie Darsie		
organization	Betty Bird & Associates LLC	date	January 2005
street & number	2607 24 th St., NW, Suite 3	telephone	(202) 588-9033
city or town	Washington, District of Columbia	state	N/A

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

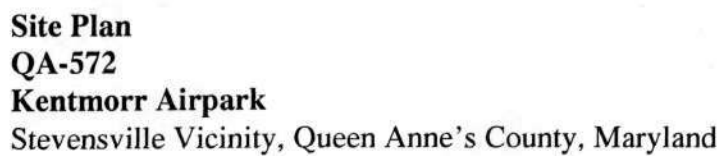
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Continuation Sheet

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LIST OF ADDRESSES

All of : Kentmorr Road
Reynolds Avenue
Lane Avenue
Allen Avenue
Annette Avenue
Marina Drive
Chesapeake Avenue
Orchid Street



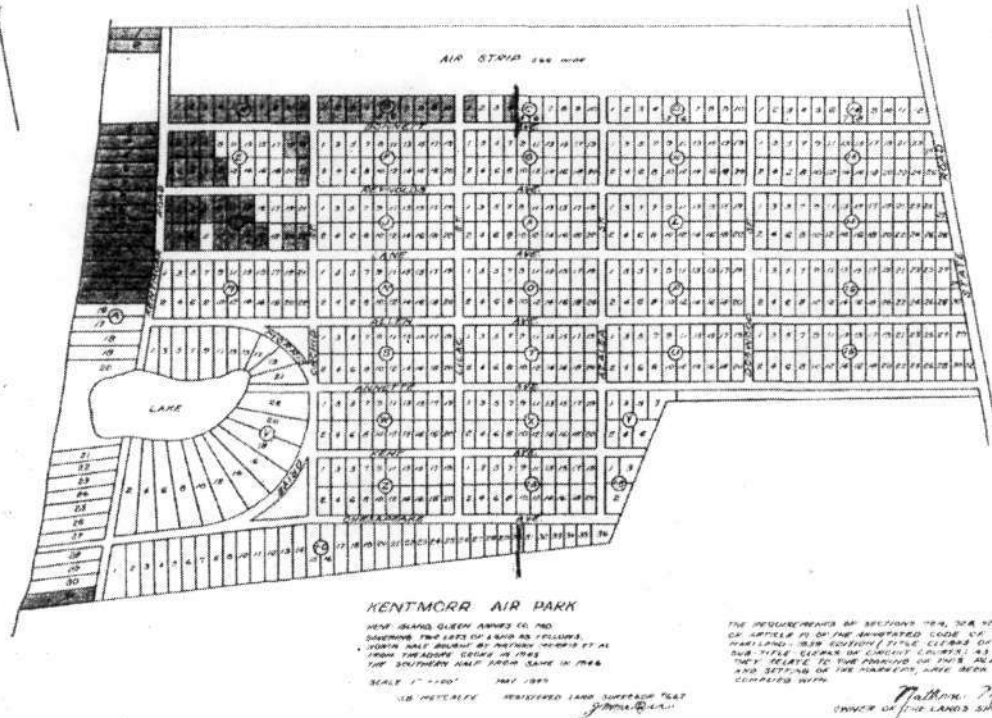
QA-572

Kentmorr Airpark

Stevensville Vicinity, Queen Anne's County, Maryland

1948

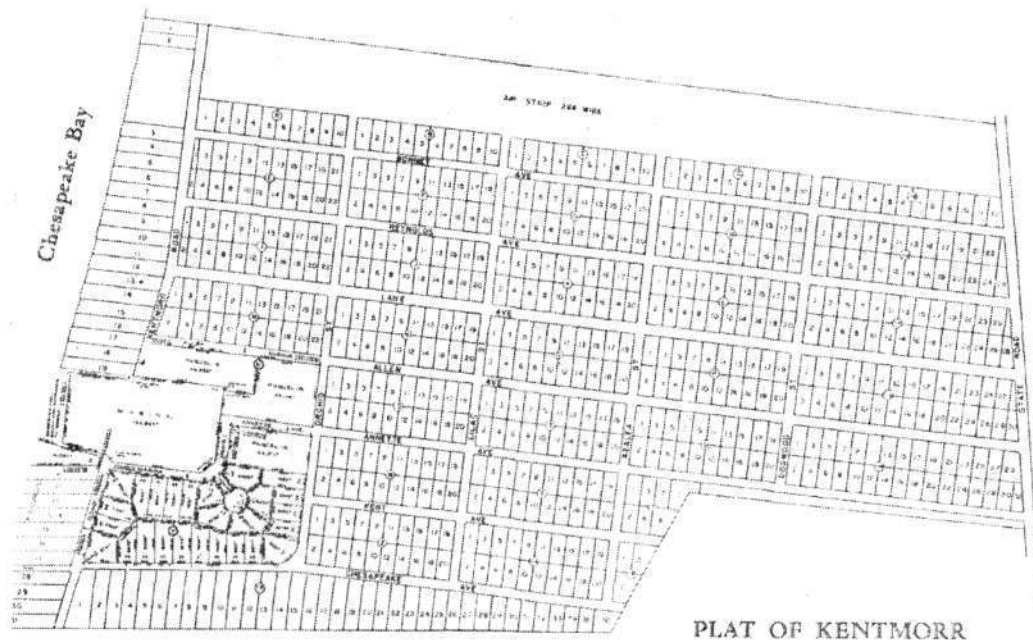
CHESAPEAKE BAY



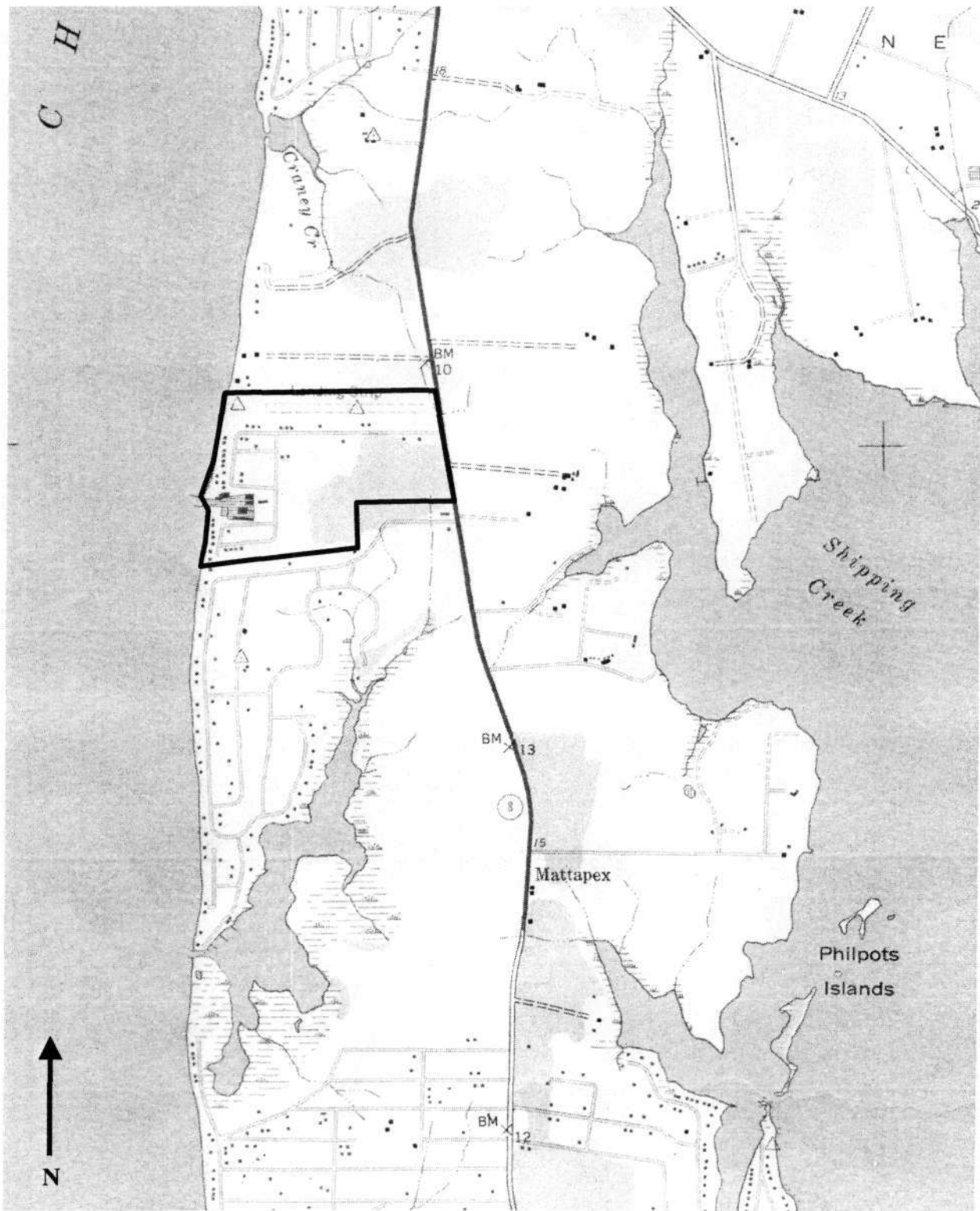
NOTE: Green Areas of the Above Plat Indicate Kentmorr Lots That Have Been Sold.

mid-1950s

Chesapeake Bay



Subdivision Plats of Kentmorr before and after construction of Marina
 QA-572
 Kentmorr Airpark
 Stevensville vicinity, Queen Anne's County



QA-572

Kentmorr Airpark

Stevensville vicinity, Queen Anne's County
Kent Island, Maryland Quadrangle (1:24,000)



QA-572

Kentmore Airpark

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Julie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

January 2006

MD SHPO

View to SW from east end of airstrip. Note hangars
beside residences

1 of 11

6502 --NININ 50+ 11 110< >



QA-572

Kentmarr Airpark

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

✓ Julie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

✓ January 2006

11.0 SHPO

View to SE from west end of airstrip.

2 of 17

2015 11 11 11:11 AM - 7059



QA-572

Kentmarr Airpark

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

John Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

January 2006

MD SHPO

View to east along Kentmarr Road showing houses
along airstrip. Note hangar at third house from left.

3 of 17

6202 — HHHH 10+ 11 220< >



GA-572

Kentmorr Airpark

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Julie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

January 2006

MLD SHPO

View to NE from Kentmorr Road onto airstrip showing
airplane and hangar.

4 of 17

6002 - 11111111 10+ 11 120< >



GA 512

Ventnor, Airpark

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Julie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

January 2006

MD SHPO

Marina, view to NE

5 of 17

2037 11 03 HIGH- 2052



QA-572

Kentmorr Airpark

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Julie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

January 2006

M.D. SHPO

Boat yard

6 of 17

2002-11-11 11:11:11



GA 572

Kentmorr Airpark

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Julie Darsie for Betty Bud & Associates

January 2006

MD 3490

Kentmorr Restaurant from across the marina

7 of 17

2057 -- 11:02 AM -- 038 11



GA-572

Kentmorr Airpark

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Julie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

January 2006

MD SHPO

Beach and entrance to Kentmorr Marina

8 of 17

2007-11-03 11:11:11



0A-572

Kentmorr Airpark

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Julie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

January 2006

MD SHPO

700-704 Kentmorr Road - 1950s houses

9 of 17

6502 --MMIN 50+ 11 210< >



QA-572

Kentmorr Airpark

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Julia Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

January 2006

MD SHPO

800 Kentmorr Road - 1950s house

10 of 17

2018 11 04 11:11 AM - 2039



QA 572

Kentmarr Airport

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Callie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

January 2006

1111 SHPO

802-806 Kentmarr Road - late 1950s houses

11 of 17

6502 - NNNIN 50+ 11 610< >



QA 572

Kentmorr Airpark

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Jule Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

January 2006

MD. SHPO

900 Kentmorr Road - 1960s

12 of 17



GA-572

Kentmorr Airpark

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Julie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

January 2006

MD SHPO

1000 Kentmorr Rd. - 1960

13 of 17

< 0414 11 +03 NNNNN - 7057



QA-572

Kentmorr Airpark

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Julie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

January 2006

MD SHPO

523-529 Chesapeake Avenue (1950s houses)

14 of 17



GA-512

Kentmorr Airpark

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Julie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

January 2006

MD 2440

1204 Kentmorr Road - 1949

15 of 17

< 852 11 +05 HFNH -- 7057



QA-512

Kentmore Airpark

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Julie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

January 2006

MD SHPO

1106 Kentmore Road - 1952

16 of 17



QA 572

Kentmorr Airpark

Green Anne's County, Maryland

Julie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

January 2006

MO SHPO

1101 Kentmorr Road-1953

17 0-17

11 03 NCHM-2007